

cartridge and for prohibiting the apparatus from entering into a new image forming operation mode when it is determined that the remaining amount of toner runs low. The apparatus determines that the remaining amount of toner runs low when either a "toner remaining amount detecting mechanism" indicates such, or when an accumulated operation time of a storing means provided at a developing cartridge exceeds a predetermined value based on the accumulated operation time or accumulated turn-on time of the storing means.

JP 2001-109357 does not disclose or suggest "a second detector", "a first controller" or "a second controller" as recited in claims 1 and 8, the independent claims.

The second reference, JP H02-136868, discloses an apparatus for preventing an image forming device from being damaged by driving the device when expendables (such as toner) are consumed. When the amount of expendables reaches a prescribed level above empty, a notifying signal is generated. If a notifying signal is present when the device is turned on, it is determined that there are no expendables remaining and operation of the device is prohibited until the control part containing the expendables is replaced.

JP H02-136868 does not disclose or suggest, "a second controller" or "enable[ing] the use of the image forming apparatus when a specific input is operated during the displaying of the alarm on the display portion" as recited in applicants' claims.


JP H06-156803 discloses turning an operation for image forming to OFF if a copy start button is depressed when document detecting sensors are in an OFF condition, and a cancel button is also in an OFF position. The disclosed device does not disclose or suggest, "a second detector", "a first controller" or "a second controller" as recited in applicants' claims.

JP 2002-055568 describes an image forming device in which multiple conditions are displayed on an LCD touch panel as an input/display means of the image forming device. JP 2002-055568 does not disclose or suggest, "a second detector", "a first controller" or "a second controller" as recited in applicants' claims.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief, including extensions of time, and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing Attorney Docket No. **325772034400**.

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